

Stay steady, live strong: Prevent falls this fall



Why it matters

- High risk: Over one in four older adults (65+) fall each year—and less than half report it to their doctor. A single fall doubles the risk of future falls (CDC, 2024).
- Rising impact: Fall-related deaths among adults 65–84 have risen over 70% in the past two decades, with over 40,000 deaths reported in 2023.
- Preventable: Most falls result from a mix of internal risks and environmental hazards—but they're largely avoidable.

Evidence-based strategies that work

1. Move with intention: Exercise for balance & strength

- Exercise reduces falls—including injurious ones—in both average- and increased-risk older adults.
- Resistance & balance training: Just 2–3 sessions per week—including methods like Otago or Tai Chi—build strength, improve balance, and lower fall risk.
- Group programs: Programs like A Matter of Balance, Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, or Otago Exercise Program are structured and proven effective.
- USPSTF guidance: Doctors are encouraged to discuss structured exercise targeting balance, gait, and mobility with adults 65+.

2. Modify your environment

- Remove clutter, secure rugs, improve lighting, and install grab bars and handrails—especially on stairs and in bathrooms.
- Simplify and secure your environment for safer navigation

3. Regular health reviews

- Annual eye exams: Clear vision reduces fall risk.
- Medication review: Discuss any drugs (including OTC) with your doctor—some can cause dizziness or confusion
- Check strength, gait & balance: Providers may recommend physical therapy or refer you to suitable exercise programs.

4. Integrated, multifactorial approaches

- Programs that combine exercise, home modifications, vision checks, and medication management offer more robust protection.
- National tools like CDC's STEADI provide screening, assessment, educational materials, and intervention strategies.

Your action plan

Step 1: Call your healthcare provider to schedule an eye exam, review medications, and discuss fall risk.

Step 2: Join a local exercise program—like Tai Chi, Otago, or A Matter of Balance—or start gentle routines at home.

Step 3: Walk through your home: remove loose rugs, clear walkways, add lights, and install grab bars.

Step 4: Ask your provider about CDC's STEADI resources or local community programs to stay steady and safe.

Keep independence, stay safe

Falls don't have to happen—and with the right steps, you can protect your health, mobility, and independence.